1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NES Bellacoola NES

575 574 535 [533] [525] 524 [178]

presents to the singers and heralds who have rendered assistance. Instead of dispersing immediately, the guests may remain to gamble or wrestle. Since there is no solemnity attached to the affair, it is a time for indulgence in amusements of all kinds. These conclude the chief features of the *a'alk* dances. Probably they once played an important part in the lives of the Bella Coola, but with the increase in importance of the *nusuk*, they have decayed into little more than a form of entertainment.

A'alk origin myths

551 575 773

Theoretically, every Bella Coola *a'alk* should be able to record the myth in which his name is embodied, but few can do so. Of course if a man has been able to validate both ancestral and *a'alk* names from the same myth, that is his authorization for both. In many cases a myth is split, and the portion containing an *a'alk* appellation is given to some member of the ancestral family, other than the chief able to validate the most important ancestral name. In such a case, the *a'alk* can record little more than that his designation came down with a specified group of the first people. This, for example, is the explanation given by a Kimsquit *waxpaal* for his name *Sxwaklala* which came to earth with *Smoo'oo* (I, p. 331) in the beginning of time. Another Kimsquit *a'alk*, *Thelyakum*, whose prerogative is to perform the dance of that name, states that it was brought down by *Sinaqaël* (I, p. 326), who assumed the designation of *Thelyakum* after its performance. This early settler had the additional name of *Wi'nalus*.

598

The two following origin myths were obtained in some detail:

Once,[1] long, long ago, *Sqaoo'oo* came to the conclusion that it was not good for the inhabitants of the world to be afraid of supernatural beings. He decided that the best way to dispel this dread would be to arrange a marriage between his daughter, *Sxwaxwa*, and a mortal; so he

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[1] Related by Mrs. Willie Mack. European elements have obviously been incorporated into the first part of this legend, though the narrator considered the whole tale to be ancient.

2:36:Howaith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NES Bellacoola NES

perform several ancient rites through a desire to "show off" before someone who was ignorant. In recent years there has been a tendency to concentrate on *haxiut* ceremonials, and to judge a man's worth by his lavishness in them, but this is only a modern development due to the prohibition of the potlatch. Nevertheless, even in former times some individuals preferred to invite foreign guests to *haxiut* dances and to give them valuable gifts rather than to save these for potlatches; such a ceremony is called a *kukwistut*. Whenever strangers are present at a *haxiut* dance they receive small pieces of dyed cedar-bark as proof of the friendly intentions of the host. The general consensus of Bella Coola opinion is that it is foolish for a man to concentrate on *haxiut* performances, particularly if he impoverish himself to the detriment of potlatches.

Although foreign guests are seldom invited to *haxiut* rites, a dancer frequently calls in his fellows from adjacent villages. But as the ceremonial season is simultaneous in the different settlements, with almost eighty performances, it is often impossible to avoid conflict in dates. Which invitation shall have preference is decided in the following manner:

During the days of *gulus* and *nuhaxus* the dancer sends a herald of powerful physique to invite guests from as many villages as he wishes. Simultaneously, a messenger may be approaching from the opposite direction with a similar invitation. Each envoy watches carefully around each bend in the path for his rival, and whichever can first call out his message is entitled to continue to give his invitation in the village of the entwisted herald. It is considered exceedingly bad taste to decline a summons, as the ceremony to which the delayed herald was bearing an invitation must be postponed. Sometimes the two messengers sight one another simultaneously, and the relative priority of their messages is then decided by a contest of strength. The rivals stand in the path, shoulder to shoulder, arms close to their sides, and shove with all their strength, the winner being the one who can force his opponent to move his feet. This last means of deciding is used exclu-

2; McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NE6

CHAPTER IV

GAMES

517 THE subject of games, lying on the border-line of social
121 customs, was one which was not fully investigated. The
[177] Bella Coola, like all other peoples, have a number of sports and pastimes and although the old diversions are being forgotten by the younger people, many of the old men and women are familiar with those played in their youth. As isolated customs these may be of small value, but games of all kinds often preserve ancient practices and, as providing useful clues to the spread of peoples or of culture, are worthy of investigation. Unfortunately, lack of time made it impossible to give the subject the attention it deserved, and the few games here described must not be considered an exhaustive treatment of the subject.

526 Though less fond of competitive sports than the Indians
[191] of the Plains, the Bella Coola enjoy canoe-racing and wrestling.
[128] The former appears to have been an ancient diversion; picked crews from different villages competed amid the encouraging shouts of their fellows, and even now the younger men are anxious to display their skill in this respect. Wrestling, which
[177] used to be common during all non-sacred gatherings, has almost entirely disappeared since the prohibition of the potlatch.

538 The favourite sedentary pastime, enjoyed equally by young
[517] and old, is the telling of stories. Those of a sacred nature, especially ancestral myths, are reserved of course for ceremonial occasions, but the older men and women remember
[125] many tales describing the exploits of birds and animals which are recounted again and again to the enjoyment of the listeners, although they may have heard the same recital fifty times. Children enjoy the companionship of some old story-teller and it is a common sight to see an old man or woman, surrounded by an eager group, explaining once more how Raven outwitted his rivals or was himself led into difficulties. Many of these
[167] stories are somewhat indecent; others appear brutally frank,

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

525 he is wrong, he pays them. It is said that in former times each stick used to be painted with a special device, and that each had its own name; even now they are beautifully made and highly polished by much passing from hand to hand. The Carriers [171] play the same game but use beaver teeth instead of sticks. Formerly it was not uncommon for a man to bet his goods, his wives and children, and even himself at this game. If he lost, [567] the persons so wagered became slaves of the victor unless [575] redeemed by their friends. Women, too, gambled freely; in fact, neophytes recently admitted into the *kusiut* society were the only ones to whom this pastime was forbidden.

526 Of actual games, the one most commonly played is *skiia*. As many as eight or ten contestants can take part, each providing himself with one, two, or three stones,[1] pecked down to the proper shape. Each is about six inches in length, three inches wide, flat on one side, and oval on the other, well rounded at either end. Before the coming of the white man, when the Bella Coola habitually used stone, it is said that one of these could be made in a few minutes. A mark is set up, and the first player throws his missile in the air, endeavouring to make it come to rest as close as possible to the target. The game is usually played on an open space near the village, but even on comparatively smooth ground there is great chance of bouncing and the thrower must gauge this possibility as well as have correct direction and distance. The second player likewise throws his stone, trying to land it nearer the target, or to knock away his rival's. In so doing, the latter, lying on the ground, is often broken, which puts its owner out of the game for the time being. When all have thrown, the one who has come nearest the mark is the winner. Sometimes each contestant throws two or more stones, and sometimes sides are chosen. Large numbers of broken gaming stones can be found [172] near every old village site, confirming the statements of the older men and women concerning the universality of the sport

[1] Likewise called *skiia*, a name said either to be derived from that of a fungus, or that the latter is derived from it.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

in former times. *Skłsa* might almost be called the Bella Coola national game, although it is now (1923) seldom played. 526 [172]

A game with somewhat similar rules is *xqulaiăt*, played with small wooden spears tipped with bone. When a number of men or boys decide to play, they choose two captains who in turn select their teams; any number can take part, provided that the sides are equal, but five each is usual. There is a special name for each player according to his position, and he bets against the corresponding member of the other team. A mark is set up, and one of the captains throws his spear, so that it will stick upright in the ground as near the target as possible. The rival leader endeavours to beat this, and if he fails, his second man throws, and each in succession until one comes closer to the goal than the rival captain. Then the latter's number two tries to beat the last thrower, followed by those on his own side until one succeeds or till all have thrown. The game thus ends when all of one side have thrown unsuccessfully. The winning side is, of course, the one to which belongs the player whose throw is nearest the target. Each member of the losing team pays his wager to his adversary and a second round is begun. 526 525

The sport is now rarely indulged in, but in former times games used to continue all day, and valuables were lost in the gambling which was considered to be a necessary part of it. Men used to observe ceremonial chastity to increase their chances of success and the expert was regarded with admiration by younger lads. The crack team of a village often used to visit other towns to compete against their representatives, and the games were contested amid frenzied excitement on the part of the supporters. This occasionally led to serious fighting. [785] [554] [628] [578]

Another sport of a similar type is archery; a mark is set up and each competitor tries to lodge his arrow as close to it as possible. This game has now entirely lost favour, the young men preferring a type of football played without strict attention to rules, but with great energy. 526

Bella Coola children, too, have their games and recreations, many of them of an imitative nature. Little boys enjoy nothing 857

4: McDermith E-3 (1922-1924) 1949
NEA Bellacoola MSS

[559] better than hunting birds and small animals with miniature bows and arrows, or snaring them in nooses of grass or string. Little girls make playhouses in which they cook wonderful meals of berries, with perhaps the addition of a wooden fish. On the whole, however, the children do not enter into play so boisterously as white boys and girls, nor do they seem to derive so much pleasure from it. In former times, when clothing was scanty, small lads used to delight in poking nettles and beating one another with the stinging branches; this must have caused considerable pain, but it was a point of honour not to cry out, and anyone, perhaps caught unaware, who showed discomfort, was laughed at as a coward. Both boys and girls are fond of [152] [291] [524] swinging, and even adult women sometimes find time to enjoy themselves by swaying to and fro at the end of a rope.

Young Bella Coola do not have as many toys as white children, and none of them is complex. Some girls have crude wooden dolls, though elaborate figurines are reserved for use [575] [291] in *hesiut* dances. Perhaps the most cherished plaything is a small puppy or, in recent years, a kitten, though the unfortunate animal is handled and mauled without consideration. A good carpenter may make for his son a wooden top or a bull-roarer, to the envy of his less fortunate friends. Both types of toys are said to be used in [575] *Nuxmit-a* and at some *hesiut* dances the masked figures carry them to play with.

[524] [125] There is one game, *chit*, which the salmon are said to delight to watch, and which is accordingly played by boys as soon as the first spring salmon have been disposed of with fitting rites. Each makes for himself, or is given by his father, a wooden spear with a projecting barb, fastened as shown in the accompanying sketch (see Fig. 1). A loop of branches is made and thrown into a pool of stagnant, or slow-moving water, on each side of which stands a rival group of competitors. At a signal, all throw their spears simultaneously, with the intention of passing them through the ring, so that the barb of each will

Fig. 1. "The spear."

become entangled in the loop when drawn back by the cord attached to the butt. A tug-of-war now takes place, those of each party who have caught the ring endeavouring to pull it to their side of the water. At last one or other is successful, and brings ashore the prize, with the dangling spears of their adversaries. Sometimes a kai with a fine weapon determines to retain possession of it at all costs and is dragged through the pool to the amusement of all.

COMPETITIONS

It is doubtful whether the subject of competitions should be considered as belonging to mythology, warfare, or games, since it has aspects pertaining to each. Several of the elder men affirmed that prior to the introduction of muskets, it was not uncommon for rival villages to stage fights according to definite rules, after full intimation of the attack had been given. This usually followed a period when angry comments had been made, but when the provocation was not sufficient for war. In such a case, the challenging town would notify its rival that on such a date an expedition consisting of, for example, twenty canoes would attack them with stones. Such an announcement could not be disregarded; the inhabitants of the two settlements prepared for action and engaged the large number of onlookers essential to all such competitions.

Many years ago, the Kimagusi people challenged the enemy to a tournament of this kind. It was first necessary to choose the contestants. Twenty of the strongest men were selected, each to stand in the bow of a canoe and hold a mosquito to shield the paddlers behind. To test their endurance, each took his place and the canoes were paddled towards the shore while all the other inhabitants, lined up on the beach, showered stones on them. On this first test, six of the twenty fell beneath the avalanche of projectiles and were accordingly considered too feeble. Their places were taken by six others who were tested the same way the following day, and the same procedure was repeated until the twenty strongest men in all Kimagusi had been found. A certain *Simagai* was chosen as

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capsize. Meanwhile the other people had been carrying out similar acts, so that the ritual was of both settlements were ready on the appointed day.

A cave was now formed to give final notice of the approaching battle so that the enemy cannot from each settlement came together, fully armed and armed. Five or six cannon on each side came to blows, the captain of each cell singling out a battle one and dealing with it alone. The cows from cows over and around their own bow-men, trying to beat down the spear-shots held up by their rival, or sometimes endeavouring to throw missiles high up into the air so as to the heads of their foes. Whenever a bow-man was knocked down, he was now defenceless and subject to serious injury if they continued the fight. If, however, they abandoned the conflict, the winners made no effort to punish them further, nor did they join in an attack on any other cannon, that each cell had one adversary only was the rule in all tournaments. In this instance, the Kimojuri people were victorious, as two dozen eighteen of their cannon defeating the cell opposed to them. *Kimojuri* returned home in triumph, singing his war-song, and was received with as much enthusiasm as if he had led a successful raid. Ended the conflicts, consisting chiefly of broken heads, were sometimes almost as serious as on a foray, but no revenge was ever claimed in case of death or wound. Instead of throwing cows by hand, it was sometimes agreed that they were to be cast by slings which made the tournament more dangerous. The warriors wore all their cannon, as their hand-to-hand fighting was impossible.

It is probable that tournaments of this nature took place every years ago, although none of the men now living had ever participated in one, and many had never heard of this type of competition. Until relatively recent years, however, happy cannon-shots were held up as protections to the laws of cannon, and men were selected to the rank of being pelted with cannon in the manner just described.

One other type of game, string figures, was studied rather extensively. These are described in Appendix B.

274 THE BELLA COOLA INDIANS

*

[illegible] Group of persons oriented very [illegible] to an [illegible] social group.

[illegible] One of the nine supernatural siblings.

[illegible] 1 = Supernatural beings who [illegible] in the sea [illegible].
2 = [illegible] the supernatural beings, [illegible] to the sea [illegible] spirited to the living [illegible]. The [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] One of the nine supernatural siblings.

[illegible] "The Coming of Four Wonders." In the language of supernatural beings. The phenomena [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] 1 = Village in the [illegible] Bella Coola valley.
2 = Human soul [illegible] the village is supposedly [illegible].

[illegible] Eight [illegible] of a Bella Coola story, the [illegible] is of [illegible] origin.

[illegible] Supernatural beings who [illegible] the [illegible] of the ocean or [illegible].

[illegible] 1 = One of the five [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to the beginning of time.
2 = Daughter of an [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to an [illegible] story.

[illegible] 1 = One of the designations of [illegible], the [illegible] supernatural [illegible].
2 = [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] Being consisting of two [illegible] [illegible] with [illegible].

[illegible] Human [illegible].

[illegible] Eight [illegible] of a Bella Coola [illegible].

[illegible]

[illegible] 1 = One of the five [illegible] to [illegible] Island in the beginning of time.
2 = One of the five [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] to the beginning of time.
3 = One of the five [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] to the beginning of time.

[illegible] Daily [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] Ritual [illegible] a [illegible] between the [illegible] of [illegible] for a [illegible], and the [illegible] of a supernatural being to the five [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] Eight [illegible] of a Bella Coola [illegible].

[illegible] Third part of [illegible].

[illegible] Dramatic [illegible] of boys and girls to the [illegible].

[illegible] Power of an [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] Supernatural [illegible], [illegible] of [illegible].

[illegible] Adult [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by one of the [illegible] to the [illegible] Bella Coola valley in the beginning of time.

[illegible] Supernatural beings living [illegible] [illegible] to the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] One of the Thousand Islands near [illegible].

[illegible] Eight [illegible] of a Bella Coola [illegible].

[illegible]

[illegible] Marriage with [illegible] of a [illegible] rank, the [illegible] is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] Supernatural [illegible] [illegible] to a human being.

[illegible] Supernatural [illegible], [illegible] of Crab Wharf and [illegible] of the [illegible].

[illegible] Bella Bella [illegible] [illegible] to an [illegible] story.

[illegible] The [illegible] of a [illegible], [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible], from the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] to the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible].